DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 278 988 CS 210 171

AUTHOR	Karolides, Nicholas J., Ed.
TITLE	Literature/Three Views of Women.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English.
PUB DATE	Apr 81
NOTE	28p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
JOURNAL CIT	Wisconsin English Journal; v23 n3 Apr 1981
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Authors; Book Reviews; *Characterization; Elementary Secondary Education; *Females; Higher Education; Literary Criticism; *Literature Appreciation; *Social Attitudes; Teaching Methods; Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

The articles in this journal issue explore the use of literature in instruction and, particularly, the characterization of women in literature. The titles of the articles and their authors are as follows: (1) "George Orwell and the Politics of Misogyny" (Robert Keith Miller); (2) "Women and Huckleberry Finn: A Literary Criticism" (Linda Roehrig Knapp); (3) "Hester: A View of Strength" (Anne Chaffee White); (4) "Form and Substance: Teaching the Short Story" (Ann O. Gebhard); (5) "Using Literature to Teach Expository Writing" (Sister Mary C. Krauss); (6) "Talking Reading" (Fred Barton); and (7) "Thematic Overtones in 'Heart of Darkness'" (Rita Rathburn). Reviews of selected books for children, adolescents, and teachers are included. (HTH)

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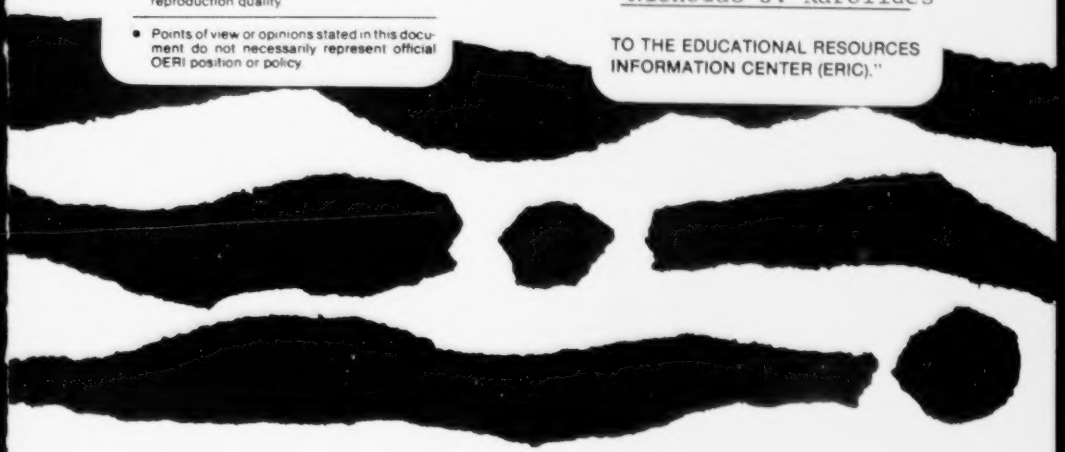

CS210171

LITERATURE/THREE VIEWS OF WOMEN

For English Teachers At All Levels
April, 1981 Volume 23, No. 3

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WISCONSIN ENGLISH JOURNAL

For English Teachers at All Levels

An Official Publication of

THE WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481

Editor, Dr. Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, WI 54022
Advertising Manager, Mary Meiser, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire 54701

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Wisconsin English Journal

VOLUME XXIII APRIL, 1981 NUMBER 3

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The **Wisconsin English Journal** is published three times annually in October, January, and April by the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 54481. Subscription rate is $5.00 per year for individuals not members of the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, $5.00 per year for public and private libraries, curriculum centers and similar professional offices. In matters of question, the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English reserves the right to determine which subscription rate applies. Single copy $1.75. Postage is prepaid on all subscriptions mailed within the United States and territories and possessions, and all other countries in the same scale of postage rates. Remittances should be made payable to the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English by check, money order, or bank draft. All business communications regarding advertising, subscriptions and orders as well as all manuscripts and correspondence referring to the editorial content of the **Wisconsin English Journal** should be addressed to Dr. Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls 54022.

GEORGE ORWELL AND THE POLITICS OF MISOGYNY

ROBERT KEITH MILLER
University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

When, in 1931, George Orwell set out to pick hops in Kent, he encountered an old Irishwoman, "an extraordinarily cheerful old girl, and full of stories." "We got some hot water from a cottage," he tells us, "and the Irishwoman had tea with us, and gave us a lot of food that she had begged and did not want; we were glad of this for we had now only 2½d left, and none too much for food."[1] This seemingly simple episode is not without significance. For drawing upon his experience in Kent for the second half of *Down and Out in Paris and London*, Orwell makes a point of mentioning that he met only one female tramp, "a fattish, battered, very dirty woman of sixty," with "a small, blinkered, feminine soul, that had learned absolutely nothing from years on the road."[2] An essentially positive experience has been transformed into something much bleaker.

It might be argued that such editing reveals Orwell's determination to make his audience see that poverty is often degrading. On the other hand, Orwell was not above romanticizing the poor, and he described for his readers several attractive tramps--all of whom happen to be men.[3] It seems reasonable to assume then, that the way in which Orwell forgets about his Irishwoman is related primarily to the hostility towards women which becomes increasingly apparent within his published works, and which is ultimately related to the evolution of his political philosophy.

Orwell's contempt for women reveals itself in a variety of ways. In the first place there are the harsh judgments which Orwell's men make about the women they encounter. The narrator of *A Clergyman's Daughter* informs us that frigidity is "a thing too common nowadays, among educated women, to occasion any kind of surprise." (*ACD*, p. 94) In *1984* Winston Smith tell us, "It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and noser-outers of unorthodoxy." (*1984*, p. 12) And seemingly speaking for Orwell himself--since the passage is presented within quotations as an "entry from my diary"--the narrator of *Down and Out in Paris and London* observes:

> "Sleeping in the saloon, twenty-seven men, sixteen women. Of the women, not a single one has washed her face this morning. The men went to the bathroom; the women merely produced vanity cases and covered the dirt with powder." Q. A secondary sexual difference? (*DOPL*, p. 126)

The implications of such passages as these is clear--women are inferior to men.

While the modern reader is almost certain to dismiss this judgment, it does not lack support within the context of Orwell's own work. The judgments which Orwell's male characters make about women are made credible by the descriptions of the women by whom they are surrounded. If George Bowling, the hero of *Coming Up For Air*, is led to declare: "It made me downright glad to be a man. No man ever goes to pieces quite so completely as that," (*CUA*, p. 243) it is only after he has caught sight of an old sweetheart, transformed by the years into a "great round-shouldered hag, shambling along on twisted heels." (*CUA*, p. 245)

Fanatically racist and utterly small-minded, Elizabeth Lackersteen eventually drives the weak but essentially sympathetic Flory to suicide in *Burmese Days*--and Orwell declares that much of her cruelty was "the natural feminine move." (*BD*, p. 194) Then there is Dorothy Hare, the clergyman's daughter, who feels "a wave of disgust and deadly fear" (*CD*, p. 306) when confronted by sex, and her employer--the dreadful Mrs. Creevy--who "was one of those people who experience a kind of spiritual orgasm when they do somebody else a bad turn." (*CD*, p. 236) Hilda Bowles is described as one of those women who "merely want to slump into middle age as quickly as possible." (*CUA*, p. 159) And perhaps most damagingly--Julia, the seemingly liberated woman, is dismissed as "only a rebel from the waist downwards." (*1984*, p. 129)

It is hard to overlook the contempt which sounds throughout most of these descriptions. When Orwell can look at a beggar and belittle "her silly fat face, washed clean by rain and tears, [which] looked like a bladder of lard, if one can imagine a bladder of lard contorted with self-pity," (*CD*, p. 117) or when he can mention an encounter with "women of every conceivable type" and go on to describe "large, chubby, bullying women, thin, acid, catty women, alert frigid women in gold pince-nez, vague rambling women who looked as though they practised vegetarianism or attended spiritual seances," (*CD*, p. 163) he is clearly a man with a fixed point of view which he is unafraid to share--however inconsistent it may be with the basically human impulses which motivate his work as a whole.

But even if it were not for such negative characterizations of women, it would be possible to deduce something of Orwell's attitude towards women from the role they occupy within his plots. Only one of Orwell's novels features a woman as its principle character, and Dorothy Hare--who chooses to spend her life leading Girl Guides and cutting out costumes for amateur theatricals so long as she can remain safely virgin--is at best a pathetic character who cannot bring herself to engage with life. And it is significant that the only two male-female relationships of any intensity in Orwell both end disastrously: Flory's infatuation with Elizabeth Lackersteen, in suicide--and Winston Smith's affair with Julia, in betrayal.

But the most striking aspect of the position of women in Orwell's work is that it is essentially subordinate, for Orwell's novels are primarily concerned with the society of men. Whether about the lower depths of metropolitan life, or attempted revolution in Spain, Orwell's most characteristic plots focus upon the adventures of men who have somehow escaped from the influence of women. (It might even be argued that even Winston Smith's affair with Julia is ultimately eclipsed by his relationship with O'Brien.) Women are usually presented as no more than part of a conventional and life-destroying world from which basically sympathetic men are trying to escape.

It is within this framework that we should understand *Coming Up for Air*, since it is a particularly useful novel in attempting to understand Orwell's attitude towards women. The novel opens with George Bowling's realization that he has reached middle age. He pauses to consider:

> No woman...will ever look twice at me again, unless she's paid to. Not that at that moment I particularly wanted any woman to look twice at me. (*CUA*, p. 5)

And he then decides, "I'd been a good husband and father for fifteen years and I was beginning to get fed up with it." (*CUA*, p. 6) This attitude is easily understood when we meet his wife:

> Hilda is thirty-nine, and when I first knew her she looked just like a hare. So she still does, but she's got very thin and rather wizened, with a perpetual brooding, worried look in her eyes, and when she's more upset than usual she's got a trick of humping her shoulders and folding her arms across her chest, like an old gypsy woman over her fire. She's one of those people who get their main kick in life out of forseeing disasters. Only petty disasters of course. (*CUA*, p. 159)

Bowling decides to "come up for air" by escaping from his suffocating marriage, and spending a week, on the pretext of a business trip, in the small country town in which he had grown up--a town to which he has not returned in twenty years. The adventures which he has there are nearly all unfortunate, and by the end of the novel, he is driven back to his home, and to a wife who is if anything shriller than ever.

Bowling fails to find freedom because he makes only a half-hearted attempt to escape from the world in which he feels trapped. He is anxious to escape from his wife, but he is unwilling to free himself from the influence of women altogether. Hoping to find a woman with whom he can enjoy himself, Bowling puts himself in a position wherein he is subjected to constant humiliation. He encounters an eighteen year old girl who gives him only a quick frightened look, leading him to decide that she lived "in a different world from me." (*CUA*, p. 227) He goes to a tea shop and is served by a waitress who gives him "a kind of frigid look." (*CUA*, p. 223) And returning to his hotel, he tries to make conversation with a "fair haired dame" but is decidedly unsuccessful:

> She didn't answer, merely lowered for about a half a second the paper she was reading and gave me a look that would have cracked a window. It was awful. (*CUA*, p. 228)

Attempted flirtations of this sort necessarily inhibit Bowling's search for freedom. They keep him trapped within his new suit--"blue flannel with a thin white stripe," as he proudly tells us--in the very convention ridden world that he was trying to flee. The freedom which he remembers is not to be rediscovered in village pubs or tea shops, and it is certainly not to be found in the company of women. Bowling's vision of freedom is, in effect, a memory of boyhood, the time when he had nothing to do with women:

> And it's a wonderful thing to be a boy, to go roaming where grown-ups can't catch you, and to chase rats and kill birds and shy stones and check carters and shout dirty words. It's a kind of strong, rank feeling, a feeling of knowing everything and fearing nothing, and it's all bound up with breaking rules and killing things. The white dusty roads, the hot sweaty feeling of one's clothes, the smell of fennel and wild peppermint, the dirty words, the sour stink of the rubbish dump, the taste of fizzy lemonade and the gas that made one belch, the stamping on the young birds, the feel of the fish straining on the line--it was all part of it. Thank God I'm a man, because no woman ever has that feeling. (*CUA*, p. 75)

Despite the candid recognition that boys can be cruel--evidenced in the detail about killing birds, a detail which Orwell repeats as if for emphasis --the essentially lyrical quality of this passage cannot be denied. This is a song of freedom, a celebration of the open air and "breaking rules." It is impossible, of course, for an adult like Bowling to return to this lost world. When he finally brings himself to leave the village and his hopes for a sexual encounter behind, heading out instead for the secret fishing hole of his youth--he finds that it has become part of a housing development. He finds, in short, that there is no going back. He has come up for air, but all that he found was disappointingly thin.

Keep the Aspidistra Flying reveals a similar theme, only here the plot is worked around a man who wishes to avoid getting married in the first place.[3] Gordon Ravelston wants to be a poet, and he is convinced that poets must live lives different from those of the common lot. He would like to be very rich, but at the outset of the novel settles for life in a garret as suitable, at least, for his romantic conception of self. What he can not abide is middle class respectability--the world of home mortgages and dentist bills from which he has sprung--since he believes that it is unsympathetic to art.

Gordon sees "respectability" and "marriage" as virtually one and the same. He can not imagine getting married without settling down and returning to the "good" job he had given up at an advertising agency, in order to be literary on a higher plane. As a poet, he is something of a failure, but this makes him all the more desperate to continue. Becoming increasingly bitter as the novel progresses, Ravelston eventually destroys the long poem which he had been working upon, married his long suffering fiancee, and even buys an aspidistra--heretofore his favorite image for domestic deadliness.

Like George Bowling, Gordon Ravelston had been trying to find freedom from a society which he found both confining and humiliating--and like Bowling, he ultimately fails. Just as Bowling had been unable to put aside incompatible desires, so too does Ravelston--despite all his bohemian bravado--never really succeed in escaping from his middle class heritage. He wants to be a poet, but he also wants to be admired, and while he self-consciously embraces poverty, he also wants to impress his well dressed fiancee by taking her out to fancy restaurants. He is torn between two worlds, and his eventual decision to marry is, in a sense, inevitable.

Bowling could not do without women; Ravelston could not do without money--but for Orwell there is almost no difference between the two. The association, in his work, between women and money is so strong, that it is difficult to conceive of one without the other. Consider, for example, Ravelston's denunciation of women:

> "Women! What nonsense they make of all our ideas! Because one can't keep free of women, and every woman makes one pay the same price. 'Chuck away your decency and make more money'--that's what women say. 'Chuck away your decency, suck the blacking off the boss's boots and buy me a better fur coat than the woman next door.' Every man you can see has got some blasted woman hanging around his neck like a mermaid, dragging him down and down--down to some beastly little semi-detached villa in Putney, with hire-purchase furniture and a portable radio and an aspidistra in the window." (*KAF*, pp. 113-114)

While it is true that this passage can not be taken at face value--for within the context of the novel it is clear that Gordon is being both melodramatic and unfair--it nonetheless suggests something of the real nature of Orwell's attitude towards women.

Orwell objects to women because he believes that they are mercantile. We see this in the social creed of Elizabeth Lackersteen,[4] in the educational philosophy of Mrs. Creevy--based upon the doctrine that nothing matters but "the fees"--and, more pathetically, in Hilda Bowles and her obsession with the cost of butter. Women attach a price to everything, and as the narrator in *Down and Out in Paris and London* observes, "there is no doubt that women never, or hardly ever, condescend to men who are much poorer than themselves." (*DOPL*, p. 204)

Orwell's hostility towards women is now a little more understandable. It is not simply the eccentricity of an otherwise benevolent soul; it is symptomatic of his deep alienation from the society in which he lived. For if Orwell was skeptical about the preoccupations of capitalist democracy, he was inclined to perceive women as representative of the very worst type of self-indulgence which that type of society fostered: They consumed, with neither gratitude nor guilt, what others produced. Their devotion to "appearances," and "getting ahead" made them seem to Orwell as emblematic of the fuling class. He consistently associated them with a craving for luxury, and in a world in which millions starve, this could only be seen by him as a sure sign of social decadence.

It eventually becomes clear that women had political significance for Orwell, and his rejection of them must be seen in this light. Always nagging, and forever "tidying up," women represented for Orwell the forces of order and control. They make others work for them; their demands are unlimited, and they are the principle supporters of an unjust and materialistic society. "It doesn't matter who invented it," as Ravelston declared about money, "the point is that it's the women who worship it." (*KAF*, p. 114)

Orwell was consistently anti-authoritarian, and this aspect of his thought kept him from supporting any one political party. His attitude towards women may be seen then as a metaphor for his attitude towards society. The first step in the social revolution for which Orwell called is to cast off the constraints which "women" have imposed on "men"--to be willing to get dirty, and go fishing, rather than dry the dishes or pay the electric bill. Misogyny has led to anarchy--and ultimately to Orwell's inability to come to terms with life.

NOTES

[1]*The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), I, 58.

[2]*Down and Out in Paris and London* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1961), p. 194. Subsequent page references cited as *DOPL*--will appear in the text. Page references to citations for other texts are treated the same way.

[3]Of Bozo, the sidewalk artist, Orwell writes, "One could not help admire him." (p. 186) Boris, the ex-officer, walks three kilometres on a bad leg after twelve hours work in order to share good news with Orwell, and shortly afterwards, food. And Scotty, the Glasgow tramp, goes out of his way to return a favor.

[4]Orwell declares, "... her whole code of living was summed up in one belief, and that was a simple one. It was that the Good ('lovely' was her name for it) is synonymous with the expensive...and the Bad ('beastly') is the cheap." (p. 90)

Announcement

The 11th annual May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture will be held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This is the first time it has come to the State of Wisconsin.

Topic:	Some Aspects of Children's Literature Development in Germany, 18th-20th Century
Speaker:	Dr. Horst J. Kunze, Director Emeritus Duetsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin
When:	Saturday, May 3, 1981 - 2:00 p.m.
Where:	Ballroom - Student Union, UW-Milwaukee

WOMEN AND HUCKLEBERRY FINN: A LITERARY CRITICISM

LINDA ROEHRIG KNAPP
Menlo Park, California

Young Huckleberry Finn is celebrated by many as one of our great American folk heroes, probably because he embodies several of our culture's most admired qualities. For example: he is an adventurer--a free spirit who would rather drift down the Mississippi River enjoying the vast and mysterious outdoors than live within the walls of a house and under the inflexible rules of conventional society. He is a young boy rebelling against elders who impose on him the authority of formal education, manners, and Sunday school morality. We admire him because he is faithful to the morality of his own heart, which means he values such things as being fair, compassionate, and loyal. Huck is practical and realistic rather than naively optimistic or sentimental; he has sagacity and common sense intelligence rather than formal education. Through his tale he observes, experiences, and agonizes over man's cruelty to man; he struggles to understand life, and he persists in his youthful hope to find goodness in man.

Huck Finn became known to many of us when we were children, through a Sunday afternoon reading adventure, a movie or t.v. special, or as required reading in an English class. The point is that most Americans at some time become acquainted with this nineteenth century American boy, and that in 1979 we still identify with him in some way--his rebelliousness against society's rules, his adventurous spirit, or perhaps his sobering experiences with violence and brutality. Gradually, Huck has emerged as a popular folk hero, because so many Americans know him, identify with him, and love or admire him for his courage to open his heart and do the things that we society-bound folks often wish we dared to do.

One characteristic of our American hero that seldom gets mentioned, however, is his values concerning women--how he relates to women, and his attitude towards these women. There are few females presented with much depth in Huck's tale, possibly because many of his adventures take place on the river, or in the streets of small towns, where women were not often seen in those times. But never-the-less, Huck does briefly encounter a variety of women, and his reactions to them are quite different.

Since Huck is accepted by many Americans as one of our heroes, perhaps if we look at how he views women, it may give us a clue to how at least part of our traditional culture has viewed women. Let's take a close look at Huck's treatment of women in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* and ask ourselves if we identify with him, and consider him a hero in that respect.

Huck begins telling his own story after he has been adopted by the Widow Douglas and is living with her and her sister, Miss Watson. His relationship with them is "uncomfortable" at best. Both ladies try to civilize him, meaning, teach him manners, educate him in school, and convert him to church religion. Huck tries. He respects them because society does, and at that time he fully accepts that society's conventions are good and that because he doesn't conform to them, he is evil.

The sisters are similar in their goal of enculturating Huck, but they differ in style. Miss Watson comes across as a stricter and harder-

hearted version of her sister. Rather than employing the widow's sentimental tactics of looking terribly hurt whenever Huck wavers from good, Miss Watson directly scolds or punishes him for his faults.

> Well, I got a good goin-over in the morning, from old Miss Watson, on account of my clothes; but the widow she didn't scold, but only cleaned off the grease and clay and looked so sorry that I thought I would behave a while if I could. (p. 14)[1]

Since the novel is told from Huck's point-of-view, and he is feeling very constrained while living with them, he characterizes them as overbearing enforcers of society's conventions and pictures himself as the innocent victim of their pedantic lectures and frequent punishment. They become negative symbols of society for Huck--he tries to appreciate their efforts in attempting to civilize him, but he is lonely and miserable. When it becomes unbearable, he escapes.

A second pair of sisters that Huck confronts much later in the story is Aunt Polly and Aunt Sally. They also symbolize for Huck the conventional rules of society, but by this time Huck sees these rules as silly and unworthy of deep respect or concern. He thus characterizes these sisters as a bit foolish in their upholding of social conventions--but loveable as compassionate mothers.

Aunt Polly expresses her love for Huck by dutifully punishing his mischievous behavior and by sincere but overly-sentimental displays of agony and tears when he is missing or in possible danger. When he is good, or restored to safety again, Aunt Polly is ebullient, forgiving, and benevolent.

Aunt Sally is almost the same. She is quick to punish children who misbehave and is easily fooled by Huck and Tom's tricks, and she exudes genuine love and concern for her kinfolk. Aunt Sally is often characterized by Huck as silly and foolish. For example, on one occasion she notices something oozing down Huck's forehead and becomes wildly distressed, thinking it's his brains . . . then when she discovers it's just melting butter that he has stolen from the pantry, instead of scolding him, she is so happy that it's not his brains, she hugs him and weeps for joy.

Huck feels sincere compassion for Polly and Sally as tender-hearted mothers and respects them as proper moral citizens. But these feelings are over-shadowed by his resistance to them as inflexible teachers of social law and policewomen in its enforcement--thus he rebels against them by making fools of them, and escaping from them, especially Aunt Sally, as she plans to adopt him and civilize him as the Widow Douglas tried to do before.

The only adult woman whom Huck confronts in his tale who is sensible, intelligent, and tolerant is Mrs. Judith Loftus. Fairly early in the tale Huck dresses up as a young girl and stops at her house to get the gossip about his own hometown, several days after he has run away.

Unlike other women who are characteristically gullible--constantly fooled by clever young boys' antics--Mrs. Loftus is not. She quickly sees through Huck's disguise as a young girl, and proceeds to confirm it by cleverly persuading him to thread a needle, throw an object, and catch something in his lap. Then, with all good humor, she exposes him. But instead of scolding Huck, she teaches him to do these things like a girl,

[1]All footnotes are from: Clemens, Samuel Langhorne. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Incorporated, 1961.

so that the next time he can pull it off more successfully, Kindly and sympathetically she urges him to tell her the truth and offers to help. But Huck tenaciously replaces one tall tale with another, so she affectionately teases him, thus exposing his pretense once again.

Although Mrs. Loftus is clever, understanding, and helpful to Huck, without being pedantic or sentimental, he never speaks of her in a warm or appreciative way. Perhaps he doesn't feel very warm towards her because she makes him uncomfortable with her questions and because he is not able to fool her. Perhaps he feels foolish and so is somewhat resentful of her.

A similar relationship occurs much later in the novel with fourteen-year-old Joanna Wilks, whom Huck consistently refers to as "Hare-lip." At this time he is pretending to be the servant of an English reverend: when Joanna asks him question after question about his life in England, Huck talks himself progressively deeper into trouble, as he knows nothing about England. Huck is embarrassed, and he does not take kindly to clever and curious Joanna. Only when her two older sisters arrive on the scene and scold Joanna for asking their guest so many questions, does Huck feel comfortable again. "It don't make no difference what he *said*--that ain't the thing. The thing is for you to treat him *kind*, and not be saying things . . ." (p. 139) Joanna is being reprimanded for asking questions and attempting to find out the truth, thus being socialized by older Mary Jane to act gullible and polite.

Both Joanna and Mrs. Loftus are uniquely unlike any of the other women Huck presents in his story. They are both strong, sensible truth-seekers. Why doesn't Huck voice warmth or appreciation for them? First, they both make Huck feel foolish because they can see through his disguise. (In fact, they are very much like Huck because they have his practical commonsense intelligence, his desire to learn the truth, and his unsentimental understanding of reality.) Second, they do not conform to society's expectations of how women should act. Third, though we are not told how Mrs. Loftus looks, we are told that Joanna has a hare-lip and is not very attractive in Huck's eyes. In almost every instance in the novel when Huck first introduces a young female, he mentions her age and describes her physical appearance.

Huck's single "romantic encounter" with the female sex is his involvement with Mary Jane Wilkes, Joanna's nineteen year old sister. The first time he sees her he says, "Mary Jane *was* red-headed, but that don't make no difference, she was most awful beautiful, and her face and her eyes was all lit up like glory . . ." (p. 130) From this first moment Huck is devoted to her, and immediately resolves to prevent some imposters (with whom he is unfortunately involved at the time) from getting away with cheating her and her sisters. He becomes almost chivalric in his thoughts as he plans the rascals' demise and romanticizes his victory and her gratefulness to him.

Mary Jane seems to be the catalyst that spurs Huck on to act. This is the first time in the story when he actually takes a definite stand against fraud, and acts--rather than just observing and reflecting about the evil things that happen around him. Huck does in fact outsmart the imposters and saves Mary Jane and her sisters' inheritance.

Later, when Huck is departing after his chivalric deed, he looks up at her window for the candle signal they had planned. At first he doesn't see it and is crushed. Then, true to almost all romantic tales, the light flashes on, and Huck's heart ". . . swelled up sudden, like to bust . . ." (p. 160)

After this episode is over Huck never mentions Mary Jane again, yet it is obvious to the reader that he has a very deep crush on her. But what kind of a girl is she actually? She instantly believes the strangers' story when they first arrive on the scene, she is openly sentimental--hugs and kisses them--and without reservation accepts them as her real uncles, despite a strong warning from a very old and loyal family friend. Later, she reveals her mercurial personality when she abruptly turns against them and impulsively wants them "tarred and feathered and flung in the river" (p. 148) because Huck, whom she hardly knows at all, tells her they are frauds. She puts the same instant faith in Huck, without a thought.

On another occasion, Huck compares her to other women:

> Mary Jane she set at the head of the table, with Susan along side of her, and said how bad the biscuits was, and how mean the preserves was, and how ornery and tough the fried chickens was--and all that kind of rot, the way women always do for to force out compliments . . . (p. 136)

Surprisingly, many of Mary Janes's characteristics we have seen before in the adult females Huck knows, and in spite of all the indications that she will grow up to be very much like those other women whom he ridicules, Huck is blindly devoted to her.

What then can we say about Huck's attitude towards the women in his adolescent life? He seems to group most adult women into a lump that symbolize for him conventional religious morality, formal education, and artificial manners. The Widow Douglas, Miss Watson, Aunt Polly, and Aunt Sally are presented with few major distinctions. With the exception of tough Miss Watson, these women are indeed kind-hearted and caring, but they are strict and set on making Huck conform to society's rules. He respects them, but he tenaciously resists their teachings and in the end chooses to escape their grasp.

Mrs. Loftus is very different from the other older women in Huck's life, yet he seems to absorb her wisdom and good will and then move on without further comment. Joanna is the only other female Huck confronts who differs from the norm. As we have seen she is very much like Huck with her probing curiosity and keen sense of reality. Huck does not feel comfortable with sharp-witted "Hare-lip" and tries to avoid her.

The one woman whom Huck does feel boundless affection for oddly enough appears to be a younger version of the conventional adult women whom he purposefully resists. Why then is he so magnetically attracted to Mary Jane? First, she is young and beautiful. Second, she is in the helpless position of being cruelly beguiled of her rightful inheritance. This sparks up within Huck a desire to protect her. His male ego is further kindled because he knows he can be the one to save her. Third, she unquestionably accepts his explanation of the fraud, and she acts extremely sweet to him. She is eager to put herself completely in his care--thus fulfilling his desire to be her dauntless hero. Huck's heart is aflame.

We are introduced to, and come to know Mary Jane through Huck's eyes, and in his starry-eyed love for her he places her on a pedestal and presents her as almost perfect. She becomes his ideal woman.

Huckleberry Finn is indeed a hero. He was Mary Jane's hero, and he has become an American folk hero. Yet his values concerning women are narrow and insensitive--surprisingly out-of-character for sensible and compassionate Huck. He is attracted by a young woman who upholds society's

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HESTER: A VIEW OF STRENGTH

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In searching traditionally taught literature for strong female figures, one is struck by the obvious choice in American Literature of Nathaniel Hawthorne's Hester in The Scarlet Letter. Here indeed do we find a strong central female figure. Hester Prynne is a human of an emotional nature and yet, too, capable of intellectual insight and activity far beyond what was "accepted" for women in Puritan New England. She is a woman of terrific strength; a woman outside the mainstream, strong in her differences. Let us consider here, then, the usefulness of Hawthorne's Hester as a teaching vehicle for use with adolescents, in terms of her character, Hawthorne's themes, and his style.

Turning first to an examination of character, we find Hester a woman of an obviously passionate nature and of superb strength; a woman capable of rather profound thought, and deep sympathy. The passionate deed she so strongly believes in, the act shared with Dimmesdale, is to all others a sin. Hester, in the forest scene pours out her seven-year-long-held belief: "What we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so. We said so to each other." The deed was passionate, as is her belief in it. In spite of her years of punishment, "The scarlet letter had not done its office, . . ." It seems in fact to have begotten nothing in the way of the contrite from her. She is not humble in her demeanor, and in fact seems proud and aloof. She will live her punishment out with an air of strength and dignity, which, in the end, will elevate Hester's status in the community. She becomes not "adulteress" but "angel."

This is not to say that Hester is arrogant or possessed only of a passionate nature. Hester suffers deeply her difference. She is alone. She contemplates much, both intellectually and emotionally. As to the former, she is alone save for her impish elfin daughter; she feels her isolation intensely and is moved at times to some distraction over that. However, in more thoughtful intellectual moments she contemplates matters, as for instance the very nature of femininity, in quite a lucid manner. Her thoughts are, indeed, quite heretical for a woman of Puritan New England. "It is remarkable, that persons who speculate the most boldly often conform with the most perfect quietude to the external regulation of society." So with Hester. Her outward conformity is strict, if not severe. Inwardly, however, "She assumed a freedom of speculation. . . ." She discerns, "The whole of society is to be torn down, and built anew. The very nature of the opposite sex . . . is to be modified before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position. . . .Woman cannot take advantage of these preliminary reforms until she herself shall have undergone a still mightier change; in which, perhaps, the ethereal essence wherein she has her truest life, will be found to have evaporated."

On this note then, we can turn to our second point of examination, that of Hawthorne's themes. While certainly Hawthorne's central themes delve into the nature of sin and repentance, we may consider his views of femininity as of some importance. We have seen Hester, Hawthorne's major instrument for feminine portrayal, as a woman of strength (of both passion and thought), and a woman also of the more traditional modes of sympathy and service. This is an important feature of Hawthorne's novel for young readers. It is

significant to their feeling and thought about the novel that Hester is not just a passionate woman, or just a woman who staunchly bears her burden of shame as a strong, implacable figure, but a woman who combines these and other features, a woman who considers her essential femininity and its success or failure in the system which she must operate. Hester, while experiencing emotional weakness brought upon her by a severely punishing system, can also demonstrate great strengths and great sympathy. Her sin has developed in her feeling for, a sympathy for others who have sinned. Thus we see Hawthorne create a fully turned out human character. Not an across-the-board "weak woman," not a mindless emotional bundle, nor a "super-woman" comprised only of strength and more strength. Young readers appreciate that Hester is multi-faceted; their sense of her reality heightens their interest in the novel. In spite of Puritan New England being outside the realm of a young reader's general realm of knowledge, these reader's can see, through Hawthorne's humane, often even softly humored, and above all, realistic portrayal of Hester and the Puritan community about her, recognizable human qualities. Hester emerges as a woman whose life grosses time in its applicability to young readers. She is not a stereotype, neither all weakness nor all strength.

The last matter under consideration here is Hawthorne's literary style. Examination of the text reveals a high percentage of words perhaps outside the realm of knowledge and/or use of an average adolescent readers. Teachers are well-advised to approach this positively and constructively with students, not as if it were an overly imposing task. Oral recitation/reading by teachers and students alike is helpful in giving the student an "ear" for Hawthorne. Certainly, if students are to develop an understanding of Hawthorne, or his character, in this instance, Hester, they must develop this "ear." In turn, this oral mode can encourage verbalizing of thoughts and feelings concerning Hester. Is Hester real to them - her deeds, her thoughts, her feelings? Encourage students to cite and read aloud portions of the text to familiarize and reinforce their acquaintanceship with Hawthorne's style when answering questions or, simply, expressing their view. This also instills an ability to see beyond what may be to students difficult stylistic matters to the essence of the character. Perhaps then students begin to better appreciate what may have been to them an "antique" writing style. When they are familiar with the mode of expression, the matter of the character or themes can be comfortably dealt with. Students begin to appreciate Hester and Hawthorne's themes because the mode of expression becomes less of a hindrance. If you will, their "prejudice" is weakened the more they are familiarized with this unfamiliar style. Hester emerges as a fully drawn character for whom it is possible to feel great empathy.

Books for Teachers
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This is still an impressive series. The individual selections are generally engaging; the number of selection changes are relatively modest with an occasional additional unit. The representation of minorities, another matter of concern, is also positively increased. The units offer intriguing foci for organizing and developing responses, building on students' natural interests as well as literatures' natural statements. They interrelate authors of different periods, places and races, suggesting a natural integration of human concerns and relationships. Teaching with these books would, I believe, enliven the study of literature, helping to focus that study on the readers' experiences with the expressions of literature.

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FORM AND STRUCTURE: TEACHING THE SHORT STORY

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Literature, like life itself, does not lend itself to easy definition. Perhaps this is why the search for structure in the English program has been so elusive. As teachers of literature we fear that rigid organization may destroy the resonance of a complicated and well-orchestrated fictional creation. Instructed by the 1966 Dartmouth Seminar, we recognize that encouragement of the process of our students' affective response is more important than the promotion of narrowly-defined cognitive understandings.

Indeed, in most schools junior and senior elective programs have liberated us from that steady march through the centuries that constituted chronological American or British survey courses. But such liberation is not without its perils. Uneasiness about the relative lack of sequence and structure in English troubles some of us. "If earlier learning," says psychologist Jerome Bruner, "is to render later learning easier, it must do so by providing a general picture in terms of which the relations between things encountered earlier and later are made as clear as possible." It may be that for many students the road to affective response requires a clearer cognitive map than is now provided.

One fruitful avenue to richer aesthetic apprehension would appear to lie in the encouragement of student understanding of the relationship of form and meaning. The modern short story offers an attractive vehicle for genre study which attempts to define a structure that provides meaningful sequence. An understanding of three key concepts, progressively developed, can lead students to a mature appreciation of the medium Frank O'Connor described as "sophisticated as a sonnet." The development of these concepts does not assume that the modern short story is an inflexibly absolute form, but does assume that its special characteristics, readily accessible to student understanding, tend to be emblematic of that fusion of form and meaning that constitutes artistic achievement.

The most basic concept is that of narrative structure: the familiar plot, setting and character, elements appearing prominently in most secondary literature courses of study. Of these, only plot, an ordered sequence of events, need be defined for the average student, but activities designed to encourage student understanding of the interaction of these elements is helpful. At the junior high school level this study, proceeding inductively, would involve the reading of a number of ballads and other story poems, as well as myths and other prose forms. After reading, students would generalize a definition of narrative. At the senior high the concept could probably be developed through review. At both levels opportunity for application of the concept should be provided through the use of contrast with non-narrative prose or poetry. Ultimately, of course, the student should easily be able to distinguish non-narrative from narrative literature which he has not previously encountered. Care has to be taken here not to confuse the student with narrative essays such as George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant," or unusual forms like Browning's dramatic monologues, which are narrative in content, but typically classed as lyric forms. Such forms might be valuable tools in the explication of the second concept -- that of the short story as a

unified form -- but introduced too early would confuse rather than enlighten.

Twentieth century critics have noted that Poe's famous definition of the short story in the preface to Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*) is limited in that it does not touch upon the essential quality of distinguished contemporary works. Nonetheless, it continues to have importance in defining the form. Good short stories do have a "single effect." As Poe indicated, the craftsmanlike writer is aware

> If his very first sentence tend not to the out-bringing of this effect, then in his very first step he has committed a blunder. In the whole composition there should be no word written of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design.

Brevity forces upon the short story a unity comparable to that imposed upon classical drama by stage convention. Like Greek tragedy, modern short stories have a single line of action and a setting unified in time and place. Attention focuses on one, or at most a few, main characters. Examples of Poe's "skillfully constructed tales" abound in secondary school anthologies. These are the stories -- mystery, adventure, science fiction -- that students frequently enjoy reading most. Poe himself, not unnaturally, is master of the art. O'Henry, Bret Harte, Somerset Maugham, Jack London all wrote classic stories of this type and, of course, there is a good deal of this material still available in popular magazines. Such stories appeal to high school youngsters at least partly because of the intensity of impact of their single effect.

Attendant upon the concept and subservient to it are matters of technique. How does the necessity for precision and concision affect the writer's craft? How does he achieve unity? Here, of course, we open a Pandora's Box of literary terms: mood and atmosphere (aspects of setting); exposition, motivating incident, conflict, complication, climax, reversal, resolution, foreshadowing, suspense, flashback (aspects of plot structure); and tone (the voice of the writer, an important aspect of style). However, if we choose to deal with this technical vocabulary, we ask the student to assimilate these principles into a concept of narrative structure which he has already well-learned. Furthermore, we are directing his attention to a consideration of how these devices bear on unity, not realism, reader interest, or some other aspect of the short story.

Many of these principles would be learned inductively. If the youngster is presented with the question of how the writer solves the problem of maintaining a setting sharply focused in time and space, yet at the same time furnishes background information about his characters, he can "discover" the technique of flashback without undue effort. Reversal, another strategem of the short story writer can be identified fairly easily if a number of stories are presented to the student for that purpose.

Obviously, throughout study, emphasis should be upon enjoyment of the stories. The "how to" knowledge hopefully will enhance that enjoyment. Not all the information necessary to a full understanding of the concept of unity would have to be imparted in one series of lessons. The teacher could stop and start again any time he liked, so long as there was proper review at the beginning of any sequence to insure the cumulative development of understanding. The students must ultimately see the relationship of the first concept -- the elements of narrative -- to the second -- the attainment of structural unity. After they have an understanding of this

relationship and the techniques involved in its achievement, they are ready to proceed to an understanding of the third level of the short story.

Laurence Perrine divides fiction into the "literature of entertainment" and the "literature of interpretation." It is fairly obvious that many of the stories studied for their unity of effect would fall into the former category. As Sean O'Faolain has remarked, some of O'Henry's stories are mere anecdotes, and much of Poe although wonderfully effective, lacks anything that could be realistically called a theme. This probably doesn't bother students in the least. Sometimes we bedevil our charges with an inappropriate search for theme. What are you going to do in this respect with "The Tell-Tale Heart"? Or almost any detective story - Poe's tales of "ratiocination"? Or the typical adventure story?

When we think of the great stories which exemplify theme -- as written by Mansfield, Lawrence, of Joyce, for example -- we really do not think of stories in which it seems justifiable or meaningful to analyze plot, setting, characters and the mechanics of unity. Although stories of this kind have a basic unity, their compelling thematic unity makes us reluctant to dissect in purely narrative terms. A story such as Porter's "The Flowering Judas," for example, blends structure and theme so inextricably that it produces an intensity of effect which can become a personal experience for the reader. This intensity of the "literary experience," is generally achieved by the writer's focus on a significant incident in the life of one of his characters.

In his NCTE pamphlet *Teaching the Short Story* Wallace Stegner writes

> At its best the miracle that we call the short story can present us with a segment of life -- people, place, event -- so arranged that it acts its own meaning as it moves and needs no caption or abstract formulation or extension. . . . At its best as in Chekov the light it casts on one man or woman can seem to illuminate the world.

It is this concept -- the idea of the short story as a particular kind of illumination of the human experience -- that would be the third and culminating consideration in the study of the short story. Hopefully, the teacher would now be able to build on the student's knowledge of unified narrative structure in creating understanding of the thematic unity which this very special insight, generally into character, can produce.

Henry James remarked "the novel is history" and like Gibbon the great novelist creates a world wherein the reader may actually begin to feel at home. Everyone who really likes to read has probably felt at one time or another a sense of displacement and loss when he comes to the end of an engrossing novel. The short story cannot do this. It can only draw the curtain on the character for a relatively brief moment and reveal his life in terms of a significant incident. The very brevity of this revelation gives it an intensity denied the novel. Obviously, the form needs to be controlled to make the most of this significant moment, Joyce's "epiphany." It is an understanding of the control required of the writer to produce the kind of story Stegner is talking about that is essentially the third concept. This understanding demands the learning of other principles -- theme most importantly. In this type of story, character is action, structure is theme.

Because frequently symbol is employed in a very dramatic way in the elucidation of theme, the gooseberries in Chekov's story, for instance, the student can attain an understanding of symbolism by analysis of this element in a well-written short story that is not readily available in

other forms. The reader doesn't need to speculate about what a symbol might mean; in a good story it has a definite purpose. If one understands the Mansfield story, it is obvious what Miss Brill's fur piece symbolizes.

Similarly, point-of-view is not just an interesting literary device, but an essential, dynamic element in most artistically conceived short stories. Critics have commented upon the importance of the Jamesian point of view in modern short stories; revelation of character or situation is most immediate when the point of view is quite close to the event it describes.

Ultimately, the attempt to structure any subject with a content as elusive as that of literature is bound to be arbitrary and inadequate. To summarize -- my suggestion is that the student be asked to look upon story first as a narrative, then as a particular way of ordering the elements of a narrative to achieve maximum unity of effect, and finally in terms of a structure that merges content -- the significant moment -- with form to achieve what Mark Shorer has characterized as "an expansion of consciousness" and becomes high art. Whether or not this procedure would be conceptually advantageous to the student, it does attempt to approach the study of the form of the short story systematically. Too frequently students, as yet unable to distinguish story from essay in their most clear form, are asked inappropriate questions about symbol or point of view. It also seems obvious that an organized program of study of one form facilitates transfer of learning to other types of literature.

This study of form as an avenue to achieving understanding of the basic structure of one literary genre subsumes the aesthetic importance of form in shaping the artist's vision. Such insight will contribute materially to the student's understanding of the relationship of form and meaning, and, thus, enlarge his repertoire of aesthetic response. Of course, if the search for structure in literature persuades us to reduce stories to vehicles for illustrating literary definitions, we have perverted our intentions. But certainly, the study of the short story as a distinct form deserves more attention than it sometimes gets in the English classroom. Possessed of the unity of effect which so bedazzled Aristotle in Greek drama, the short story is pre-eminent among literary forms for its teachability: its brevity, precision, and readability, furnish the English teacher with a superb medium for enhancing the quality of his students' response to literature as art.

Women and Huckleberry Finn
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conventions--who is gullible, quick-tempered, and eager to throw herself completely into the care of a male who makes promises to her. He opposes older women who teach these same conventions of society, and he is indifferent to women who are unattractive, strong and clever. or who embarrass him.

These attitudes are distinctly inconsistent and superficial. Huck certainly does not form his opinions about men on the basis of such inhuman standards. Yet he judges women by their appearance, or their willingness to make themselves agreeable to him.

Are these the kinds of values we accept in our cultural tradition as heroic? And could it be true that these attitudes towards women are still shared by men (and women) who read Huck's tale today?

USING LITERATURE TO TEACH EXPOSITORY WRITING

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The inability to write clearly plagues both high school and college students. It is not our purpose here to analyze the combined causes of the alarming drop in verbal test scores over the last twenty years. Nor is it necessary to belabor the self-evident fact that the inability to write is a serious impediment to academic achievement and even more seriously to clear thinking. Nearly every educator is aware that clear written expression necessitates logical thinking and that writing even fosters logical thought. Teaching people how to write logically and coherently, therefore, is not a light responsibility. Writing helps shape habits of thought and "our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow," say the ancients.[1] Neither is the teaching of expository writing an easy task in a society whose media is largely audio-visual and demands so little imaginative activity and reading and writing skills. Many of our students, then, come to us not only as unskilled writers, but also as unpracticed and unreflective readers. How can we, in one or two semesters of a composition and literature class, offer them the mental exercise they need in both reading and writing without sacrificing either literature or expository writing?

After having, for several years argued for and taught "pure" composition for one semester and "pure" literature for the other, I have, in the last three years, discovered a number of unsuspected advantages in using literature to teach expository writing. Perhaps these advantages will be most apparent in the description of three assignments which have been particularly helpful.[2]

At the beginning of the semester, after learning the importance of constructing a thesis which is restricted, precise and unified, the students prepare for their first writing assignment, "illustration-by-example." They read any short story which has one or more fairly well-developed characters. During class discussion they construct a number of descriptive statements about a single character. These serve as acceptable theses. They cite episodes and passages in support of their theses. Since I am a firm believer in the value of imitation, I give the class a sample essay written about one of the characters in the story being discussed. Its thesis, simply a precise descriptive statement about a single character, is illustrated by citing episodes and passages from the text. Sherwood Anderson's "I'm a Fool," for example, lends itself to this type of assignment. The sample thesis might read, "The narrator in 'I'm a Fool' suffers from extreme feelings of inferiority." Any number of plot episodes and narrator's statements about himself, beginning with the title, can be used to support this thesis. After students have read and discussed the story, constructed acceptable theses, planned their support, and seen a finished product, the sample essay, they are ready to write their own illustration-by-example essay. They write about any single character in another short story. (Philip Roth's "Defender of the Faith," which has two well developed and three minor characters from which to choose, is ideal for this assignment.) The students do not discuss the story in class until their essays are finished, but the writing assignment is an excellent generator of class discussion.

The illustration-by-example essay is a simple assignment, but it is not easy for students to do well. To prove his thesis adequately students much achieve a proper balance between the use of quotation and their commentary on the significance of the quotations they cite. Unsupported assertions, the almost universal fault of young critics, are not acceptable. The necessity of proving every assertion by citing evidence from the text and referring each assertion to the thesis requires logic and objectivity. These two qualities are basic to all expository writing. The students who acquire these skills are equipped to write essay exams, book reports, papers in philosophy, history and theology, criticisms in drama, music and art. They can write lucid editorials and letters to the editor, a useful skill for their entire future.

A second writing assignment, the comparison-contrast essay, focuses on the artistic elements of literature. It provides students with a clear method of organizing their material when they wish to compare or contrast two people, objects, ideas, or works of art. The subject is some artistic aspect of two short stories, excellent subjects being escape and interpretive fiction. In preparation for this assignment the students discuss a number of criteria for judging the artistry of a story: round and dynamic characterization, a causal relationship among plot incidents, genuine sentiment rather than sentimentality and so on. Then they read two stories, one, a sentimental piece of escape fiction with flat implausible characters and an unrealistic plot, and the other, a piece of interpretive fiction which illuminates the human condition and whose characters and plot are convincing. After these stories are discussed and their artistry or lack of it is carefully examined, the students are ready to read two other comparable stories and write a comparison-contrast essay about them, choosing a single aspect of artistry such as characterization. (Paul Gallico's "The Enchanted Doll" and Isaac Singer's, "The Spinoza of Market Street," are ideal.) This assignment requires careful organization of material since each assertion about one story must be matched by a corresponding assertion about the other. Evidence must be cited and interpreted to support the thesis. This assignment, at the same time, focuses attention on literature as art. The students consider specific and objective criteria, an exercise meant to expand their powers of discrimination. Pieces of literature cannot, of course, be categorized according to artistry as one categorizes elements and compounds on a chemical chart, but a consideration of specific criteria by which to judge a work of art is a valuable exercise in objectivity.

This procedure goes beyond the subjective responses to pieces of art: it facilitates a self-subordinating pursuit of the author's vision of truth. To immerse oneself temporarily in the mental and emotional experience of another who is artist is not, of course, a repudiation of self at all, for such an immersion sharpens the readers' sensitivity to and understanding of themselves. The experience, however, requires that the readers take temporary leave of their own preconceptions and imaginatively project themselves into the experience of another. This provides valuable practice in objective thinking. When, in addition, readers are asked to judge the artistry of a work according to specific criteria, they must again subordinate their subjectivity and view the work with logic and objectivity. Such an exercise of self-subordination, perhaps paradoxically, vivifies and even exhilarates self. Instead of solipsism, upon which discussion often relies, there is the expansion of mind and emotions. Expository writing with literature as its subject. Requires this sort of imaginative and objective thought.

A third assignment, the causal analysis, requires that the student extend the point of view of a piece of fiction.[3] The student reads a story with an indeterminate ending like Hemingway's "Hills Like White Ele-

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TALKING READING

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"I didn't understand it." "It didn't make any sense." "It was dumb." How many times have literature teachers heard those cries? Sometimes it seems to break down to one for each attack of ulcers. We grin, and try to explain through clenched teeth, or sigh and plod sluggishly on, or explode and deliver a tirade against narrow, unthinking minds. Only to be met with the student's greatest weapon: The Blank Stare.

To begin to communicate is the first step. It is important to have the kids realize that they are no longer simply performing recognition drill as they read. Instead of asking them to "See Dick run," we want them to tell us why he is running. In other words, they must shift the focus of their reading from form to meaning. A preliminary discussion of the purpose of poetry and fiction is essential. Simply asking the kids, at the beginning of the unit, what they expect is usually enough to provoke some interesting discussions. They will probably expect the teacher to give them all the answers, but, by talking about the books they have read on their own, the teacher can get some examples of stories some thought were easy. These examples can be used to explain that literature exists on many different levels of understanding. Asking why some found a story hard and others easy will produce the type of responses the teacher can use to move the class to a general definition of understanding: that is, that beyond certain basic forms, it is essentially a personal thing determined by the individual.

A piece of writing can be focused on any one or several of these levels of understanding, and so far, we have trained the kids to see only one with any degree of clarity; and that is form.

Once the students get their expectations, fears, and frustrations out in the open where they can be shared, and once they learn that just because they do not understand the story in the same way that the teacher does, they are not wrong or dumb, then the real study of literature can begin.

In my short story unit I begin by letting the kids read some simple narratives such as Thurber's "The Dog That Bit People." By using questions like do you know anyone with a dog like that, and how do we go about knowing people, I can move the discussion around to where the kids are making comparisons between reality and the story. This helps them to develop one of the most important tools for understanding what they read: the ability to make the connection between the printed page and the real world. I ask them to match the people in the story to those they are familiar with from TV or the movies. Then we discuss how much we *really* know about these people, which is usually very little outside of the story line. Then we turn our attention back to the story and talk about how the characters are only extensions of the situations they are in rather than independent beings.

Then we may move on to "Footfalls" by Wilber Daniel Steele, or "The Monkey's Paw" by W. W. Jacobs. I ask what is different between the two stories we have read and the comments eventually settle on the people

involved. I ask them what exactly do we know about these people, and how do we know it? The kids then decide who the main character is and identify the pressures put on him. To do this they study the two most important secondary characters. I choose my stories in this section so that the secondary characters represent the poles of a decision the main character has to make.

That is an important point. Stories should be chosen with almost as much care as a mate. They should be arranged in increasing order of complexity, and each story should illustrate a particular aspect of short stories in general. That is not to say that we just identify characters and conflicts and move on. These are starting points for discussions as far ranging as the nature of doubt, or as specific as my sister's superstitions. It is important to emphasize the links the kids make between the characters they read about, and those in their lives. The process of getting to know a character in a book and on the street is the same, only the form of communication changes. Thus, each story becomes a springboard for the kids, and an opportunity to practice sharing the different levels of understanding each of us bring to a piece of literature. After a while, the students begin to realize that, just as their friends and associates have different moods and attitudes, so do the characters in the stories they read. Through discussion the kids realize that just as everyone does not understand people in the same way, some may think a certain person "cool" while others think the same person is a "nerd," it is not necessary, or even possible for all to understand a story in the same way.

Literature to Teach Expository Writing
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phants." He is asked to make a speculation about the characters and situation as if they were not fictional. The thesis of this essay must answer the question: Will the relationship of the couple in "Hills Like White Elephants" endure or disintegrate, and why? The student analyzes the causes for the relationship's endurance or disintegration by again citing evidence from the text and interpreting it to support his thesis. The brief story, consisting of a couple's discussion about whether or not to have an abortion, requires close reading. The writing assignment also allows for the student's expression of his personal convictions about this controversial subject, without, however, departing from an objective base, the story itself.

Educators recognize the importance of a proper balance between the affective and cognitive approaches in teaching. The English teacher cannot afford to ignore either the emotions or the intellects of his students. Using literature to teach expository writing is one of many successful ways of offering necessary emotional stimulus and intellectual challenge to high school and college youth.

NOTES

[1] The Dhammapada, tr. Juan Mascaro (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 35.

[2] I am indebted to James M. McCrimmon, *Writing With a Purpose* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972, 5th edition) for the patterns of organization for these three essays.

[3] I am indebted to Dr. Earnest Sandeen of The University of Notre Dame for this technique.

THEMATIC OVERTONES IN HEART OF DARKNESS

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Joseph Conrad maintains in his preface to the *youth* volume that the "sombre theme" of *Heart of Darkness* "had to be given a sinister resonance, a tonality of its own, . . . that would hang in the air and dwell on the ear after the last note had been struck." Such darkly-overcast resonance certainly pervades the book and lingers on in the reader's mind thanks to the careful craftsmanship of Conrad. For, from the very beginning, the author sets up a pattern of audio-visual imagery whose "mournful gloom" haunts the reader and remains with him. One easily visualizes even now, for example, the "mighty big river . . . resembling an immense snake uncoiled" which charms Marlowe into seeking out the "place of darkness." Nor does one easily forget the two secretaries "knitting black wool as for a warm pall." And if one cocks an ear momentarily, he hears the "weird incantation" of Mr. Kurtz's "adores"; and the awful, final cry of Kurtz himself, "'The horror! The horror!'" One has only, finally, to recall the images of the final sentence to conjure up anew the entire sinister world which Conrad portrays. "The offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed sombre under an overcast sky - seems to lead into an immense heart of darkness."

Conrad, indeed, sets up a nightmare of sight and sound which hovers in the mind long after the reader has set down the book. What hovers even more menacingly, though, is the exact nature of that "sombre theme" which Conrad says pervades the book. Initially, one suspects that Conrad may be using the adventure story as a medium for a subtle but pointed satire of pretentious imperialists who exploit and kill in the name of humanitarian reform. Hints to this effect claim the reader's attention almost immediately. As Marlowe makes final preparations for his journey up the Congo, he encounters the Company's "whited sepulchre" city with its "pale manager" and its "unkept" doctor, who measures his cranium "in the name of science" and glorifies the Company's "business out there." As he moves up river and passes the Company's stations, he comes upon "staring and sick Negroes . . . who withdraw to die"; and on board he pities the "cannibal crew" who eat rotten hippo meat daily and are paid with scraps of brass wire. Just before reaching the final Inner Station, he comes upon a French man-of-war which shells an "unseen enemy" with complete, meaningless abandon.

All of these hints are brought into focus in a more direct statement early in the novel, "The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much." Conrad's rather obvious statements then would seem to preclude subtle satire as the central theme of the book.

One turns, then, to the journey motif as a possible unifying theme in the novel. Marlowe confesses early in the story that he had been nothing more than a "silly bird" before his journey up the Congo. By the time he reaches the final Inner Station, though, he comments that this was the "farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of his experience."

In the interim, Marlowe undergoes a spiritual journey into his inner-most self. He finds there both negative and positive potential. He is repulsed on the other hand by the "paper-maiche Mephistopheles" whose craze for ivory leads them to compromise their value system; he is strangely attracted, on the other, by Mr. Kurtz, who "has kicked himself loose from everything in heaven and on earth."

As he watches the soul of Kurtz which knows "no restraint, no faith, and no fear . . . struggle blindly with itself," he makes several penetrating observations about himself. First he gives a reason for his trial, "I had for my sins, I suppose, to go through the ordeal of looking into it myself." Next, he acknowledges a "fascination" with the "spell of the wilderness," and he later confesses that he "had peeped over the edge" himself, but had somehow managed to draw back his "hesitating foot."

On his voyage up the Congo, Marlowe discovers a knowledge of himself which he says "comes too late." Yet he returns from the Congo a changed man - impatient with men who are ignorant of their petty selves; and so appalled by the "white-hot" potential within him that he cannot bring himself to tell Kurtz's "Intended" the awful truth. The theme, then, comes full circle, and certainly dominates the book.

Yet Marlowe's discovery of a kinship with the "passionate uproar" of Kurtz suggests a third theme, that of the possibility of a fundamental anarchic force within everyman. Conrad seems to define this force as one inimical to man's conscious personality; as an amoral principle which neither the tenets of civilization, nor the Ego, nor the intelligence itself can control. Once Kurtz has been removed from the civilized trappings of civilization, his "generous mind . . . and noble heart" succumb to the most horrible atrocities. "Being alone in the wilderness," he looks within himself and goes "mad." Kurtz, indeed, steps "over the edge." And he passes judgement upon the actions which flow from that shocking surrender to instinctive forces as he whispers his final words, "'The horror! The horror!'"

Marlowe's experience parallels that of Kurtz up to a certain point. Once he has been stripped of the refinements and taboos of society, Marlowe discovers quite early that when one is forced to meet the temptations of savage reversion, "principles won't do." Again, once he has looked upon Kurtz and has noted the astute choices he has made, he says he is "touched" by him. He is fascinated by the "magnificent eloquence" of Kurtz as opposed to the hollow echoes in the "devils" of the Central Station. Marlowe pursues him into the heart of the jungle and is caught up by the throb of the drum and the weird incantation of his faithful followers. But, ultimately, Marlowe withdraws. Tempted and shaken, Marlowe returns to England somehow intact. And perhaps Conrad's deepest thematic notion may ride on this.

For granted the natural drive for gratification of the most "monstrous passions" in everyman, is not one yet free to choose? And, having chosen not the darkness but the light, may not everyman, appalled at what might have been, strive more valiantly to become the wise Buddha - a second Marlowe come to reveal the light to those who stumble in the greyness of their petty lives. So that Conrad's "sombre theme" may be something of a ray of illumination in the very heart of darkness, and really not "sinister" at all.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Anderson, Margaret J. *The Journey of the Shadow Bairns*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980. 177 pp. Ages 9-13

The shadow bairns are thirteen-year-old Elspeth and her four-year-old brother, Robbie. They are runaways. Their journey takes them from Glasgow, Scotland, to the prairies of Saskatchewan. In the story of their journey, Anderson creates sympathetic characters and an interesting account of the hardships and successes of immigrants to western Canada in the early 1900's.

Elspeth's father is persuaded to immigrate by the Reverend Isaac Barr, who intended to organize a settlement along the North Saskatchewan River. Plans are made, the tickets are purchased, but the children's father is killed and their mother dies shortly afterward. Elspeth's only legacy is a box of tickets, a small amount of cash, and her mother's dying words that the children must be kept together. Fearing that Robbie will be taken from her and placed in an orphanage, Elspeth decides to carry out her father's plans.

Anderson convincingly tells how the children are able to make the journey alone. The hordes of people, led by Barr, cross the Atlantic in a boat loaded far beyond its capacity, and the children are obscured by the crowds. The sheer numbers in Barr's group, coupled with its lack of organization, allow the children to sidestep the usual immigration procedures and make their way to Saskatoon. Despite the fact that the children successfully complete the journey, Elspeth has been a poor planner. She had hopes of finding her aunt and uncle in Manitoba, but those hopes are dashed when she learns of the vastness of the country. She had hopes that the Reverend Barr would help them, but these hopes are crushed, too, when she learns that he is something of a crook. When she and Robbie become separated, Elspeth mindlessly works in a frontier hotel, clinging to her last hope that Robbie is still alive.

Anderson beings all the loose ends of the story together at its end. The children are reunited, some of the immigrants from Barr's group have begun to carve homesteads out of the wilderness, and there is even a hint of romance for Elspeth. Coincidence plays a large part in this happy ending, but young readers probably won't find it objectionable. Instead, they will read quickly through the book in order to learn the fate of the plucky heroine and her brother. In doing so, they may learn a great deal about the complicated personalities of the pioneers and the difficulties they faced in settling this relatively unfamiliar territory.

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Edmonds, Walter D. *The Night Raider and Other Stories*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980. Junior High

Edmonds, author of *Drums Along the Mohawk*, *Bert Breen's Barn*, among others, in this book gives the reader four short stories full of country humor, wonderment, satisfaction, and occasionally pain. The style and the development of character seems a departure for Edmonds. There is a drollery, understatement and implication of character from events that not only is successful in a literary sense but also is attractive to a reader.

The first story, "Perfection of Orchard View," deals with a gentleman farmer who intends to raise prize pigs. Absent from his farm most of the time, he leaves the care and breeding of his prize pigs to his hired hand. The hired hand is not in agreement with the owner's plans and in his own way prevails, but always meeting the wishes of the gentleman farmer. The bet on the prize boar and the subsequent outcome of the whole plan are a hilarious climax. "The Raging Canal," which is a very serious historical story of the life of Erie Canal workers, also has its drollery and light moments. In this story the blend of violence with humor is extremely well handled, leading perhaps to a stronger impact of understanding of the difficulties of

life than would exist without the humorous elements. "Charlie Phister's Famous Bee Shot" again is a blend of the humorous and serious. In this case, the focus is on the character of Charlie, a not very effective man, who by his own cunning makes himself a hero and thereby makes fun of those who call him hero. "The Night Raider," the somberest of the stories, tells of a boy's reaction to the owl which is preying on the farm stock and the death of the owl when confined. A clearer statement of moral is in this story than in the others.

The stories are varied, engrossing, and could be read aloud as well as read individually. All in all, this is a fine book.

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Macaulay, David. *Unbuilding*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980. Upper elementary grades.

David Macaulay's purpose in other books has been to approach architectural and technological wonders and to explain, more or less according to the available evidence, how people managed to create them. *Unbuilding* is slightly different. Like *Pyramid* (1975) and *Castle* (1977), it depicts and pays respect to the imaginative and technical virtuosity with which architects and builders convert jobs of overwhelming magnitude and complexity into neat series of manageable steps. But in *Unbuilding* the virtousity is applied to a task of disassembly. You see, the year is 1989, and Ali Smith, an Americanized Arab prince, has bought the Empire State Building in order to have it shipped in pieces to a new site in the Arabian desert, where it will become headquarters for the Arab oil cartel.

The unlikeliness of all this is beside the point. We do not ask, after all, whether Romeo and Juliet would really have fallen in love so quickly. Suppose it were the case: what then? That is what Macaulay imagines out for us, in prose and drawings detailing the work of the Krunchit wrecking company.

For the most part the account is straightforward exposition--this is how the cranes were put in place, that is how the rubble was cleared without endangering people in the streets below. In this respect the account is marked by qualities--systematicity and exactness--of the work it describes. But at the same time it is a playful account. A great hairy clawed foot stands unremarked in a drawing otherwise focused prosaically on two workers unbolting a girder. The tanker that finally bears the crated building off to sea sinks in a storm, and Ali cooly turns his thoughts toward the Chrysler Building. It is as if Macauley insists that oddities and incorrigible impulses must also be included in an adequate representation of large-scale human efforts.

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FOR TEACHERS

Carlsen, G. Robert, general editor. *Themes and Writers Series* (Third Edition). New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1979. Six volumes, grades 7-12.

The thematic approach to the teaching of literature, long recommended by theorists and practitioners, found its organization in the *Themes and Writers Series* first published in 1969. The third edition is true to the original conception and organization. Each book is divided into thematic units chosen to intrigue the interests of readers at each developmental stage, chosen also to relate to typical curricular patterns; each unit contains a selection of short stories and poems with an occasional short novel, or excerpt, or a play, and a "Gallery of Fine Art," beautifully reproduced paintings, to represent the theme visually. Beginning with the ninth grade text, the anthologies include from 3-24 selections by an author, thus giving the opportunity for a multi-faceted perception of that author.

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